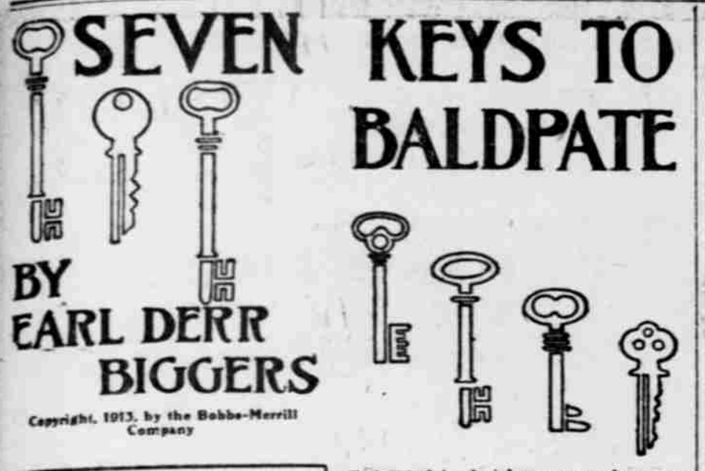
SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE



BY EARL DERR BIGGERS

The Story by Chapters.

CHAPTER I.

"Weep no more, my lady."

A YOUNG woman was crying bitterly in the waiting room of the railway station at Upper Asquewan Falls, N. Y.

A beautiful young woman? That is exactly what Billy Magee wanted to know as, closing the waiting room door behind him, he stood staring just inside. Were the features against which that frail bit of cambric was agonizingly pressed of a pleasing contour? The girl's neatly tailored corduroy suit and her flippant but charming millinery augured well. Should he step gallantly forward and inquire in sympathetic tones as to the cause of her woe? Should he carry chivalry even to the lengths of Upper Asquewan Falls?

No; Mr. Magee decided he would not. The train that had just roared away into the dusk had not brought him from the region of skyscrapers and derby hats for deeds of knight errantry up state. Anyhow the girl's tears were none of his business. A railway station was a natural place for grief—a field of many partings, upon whose floor fell often in torrents the tears of those left behind. A friend, maybap a lover, had been whisked off into the night by the relentless 5:34 local. Why not a lover? Surely about such a dainty, trim figure as this courtiers hovered as moths about a flame. Upon a tender intimate sorrow it was not the place of an unknown Magee to intrude. He put his hand gently upon the latch of the door.

And yet dim and heartless and cold was the interior of that waiting room. No place surely for a gentleman to leave a lady sorrowful, particularly when the lady was so alluring. Oh, beyond question she was most alluring. Mr. Magee stepped softly to the ticket window and made low voiced inquiry of the man inside.

"What's she crying about?" he asked.

"Thanks," said the ticket agent. "I get asked the same old questions so often one like yours sort of breaks the monotony. Sorry I can't help you. She's a woman, and the Lord only knows why women cry. And sometimes I reckon even he must be a little puzzled. Now, my wife"—

"I think I'll ask her," confided Mr. Magee in a hoarse whisper.

"Oh, I wouldn't," advised the man behind the bars. "It's best to let 'em alone. They stop quicker if they ain't noticed."

"But she's in trouble," argued Billy Magee.

"And so'll you be most likely," responded the cynic, "if you interfere. No, siree! Take my advice. Shoot old Asquewan's rapids in a barrel if you want to, but keep away from crying women."

Mr. Magee, approaching, thought himself again in the college yard at dusk, with the great elms sighing overhead and the fresh young voices of the glee club ringing out from the steps of a century old building. What were the words they sang so many times?

Weep no more, my lady,
Oh, weep no more today!

He regretted that he could not make use of them. But troubadours, he knew, went out of fashion long before railway stations came in. So his remark to the young woman was not at all melodious:

"Can I do anything?"

A portion of the handkerchief was removed and an eye which, Mr. Magee noted, was of an admirable blue, peeped out at him. To the gaze of even a solitary eye Mr. Magee's aspect was decidedly pleasing. Mr. Magee thought he read approval in the lone eye of blue. When the lady spoke, however, he hastily revised his opinion.

"Yes," she said, "you can do something. You can go away—far, far away."

Mr. Magee stiffened. Thus chivalry fared in Upper Asquewan Falls in the year 1911.

"I beg your pardon," he remarked. "You seemed to be in trouble, and I thought I might possibly be of some assistance."

The girl removed the entire handkerchief. The other eye proved to be the same admirable blue—a blue halfway between the shade of her corduroy suit and that of the jacky's costume in the "See the World—Join the Navy" poster that served as background to her woe.

"I don't mean to be rude," she explained more gently, "but—I'm crying, you see, and a girl simply can't look attractive when she cries."

"If I had only been regularly introduced to you and all that," responded Mr. Magee, "I could make a very flattering reply. And a true one, he added to himself, for even in the faint flickering light of the station he found ample reason for rejoicing that the bit of cambric was no longer agonizingly pressed. As yet he had scarcely looked away from her eyes, but he was dimly aware that up above wisps of golden hair peeped impudently from beneath a saucy black hat.

"My grief," said the girl, "is utterly silly and—womanish. I think it would be best to leave me alone with it. Thank you for your interest. And—would you mind asking the gentleman who is pressing his face so feverishly against the bars to kindly close his window?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Magee. He turned away. As he did so he collided with a rather excessive lady. She gave the impression of solidity and bulk. Her mouth was hard and knowing. Mr. Magee felt that she wanted to vote and that she would say as much from time to time. The lady

"I was crying, mamma," the girl explained.

had a glittering eye. She put it to its time honored use and fixed Mr. Magee with it.

"I was crying, mamma," the girl explained, "and this gentleman inquired if he could be of any service."

Mamma! Mr. Magee wanted to add his tears to those of the girl. This frail and lovely damsel in distress owning as her maternal parent a heavy unnecessary—person!

"Well, they ain't no use gettin' all worked up for nothing," advised the unpleasant parent. Mr. Magee was surprised that in her tone there was no hostility to him—thus belying her looks. "Mebbe the gentleman can direct us to a good hotel," she added with a rather stagy smile.

"I'm a stranger here, too," Mr. Magee replied. "I'll interview the man over there in the cage."

The gentleman referred to was not cheerful in his replies. There was, he said, Baldpate inn.

"Oh, yes, Baldpate inn," repeated Billy Magee with interest.

"Yes, that's a pretty swell place," said the ticket agent. "But it ain't open now. It's a summer resort. There ain't no place open now, but the Commercial House. And I wouldn't recommend no human being there—especially no lady who was sad before she ever saw it."

Mr. Magee explained to the incongruous family pair waiting on the bench.

"There's only one hotel," he said, "and I'm told it's not exactly the place for any one whose outlook on life is not rosy at the moment. I'm sorry."

"It will do very well," answered the girl, "whatever it is." She smiled at Billy Magee. "My outlook on life in Upper Asquewan Falls," she said, "grows rosier every minute. We must find a cab."

She began to gather up her traveling bags, and Mr. Magee hastened to assist. The three went out on the station platform, upon which lay a thin carpet of snowflakes. There the older woman, in a harsh rasping voice, found fault with Upper Asquewan Falls—its geography, its public spirit, its brand of weather. A dejected cab at the end of the platform stood mourning its lonely lot. In it Mr. Magee placed the large lady and the bags. Then, while the driver climbed to his seat he spoke into the invisible ear of the girl.

"You haven't told me why you cried," he reminded her.

"Upper Asquewan Falls," she said, "isn't it reason enough?"

Billy Magee looked; saw a row of gloomy buildings that seemed to list as the wind blew, a blurred sign, "Liquor and Cigars," a street that staggered away into the dark like a man who had lingered too long at the emporium back of the sign.

"Are you doomed to stay here long?" he asked.

"Come on, Mary," cried a deep voice from the cab. "Get in and shut the door. I'm freezing."

"It all depends," said the girl. "Thank you for being so kind and—good night."

The door closed with a muffled bang, the cab creaked wearily away and Mr. Magee turned back to the dim waiting room.

"Well, what was she crying for?" inquired the ticket agent when Mr. Magee stood again at his cell window.

"She didn't think much of your town," responded Magee. "She intimated that it made her heavy of heart."

"H'm! It ain't much of a place," admitted the man, "though it ain't the general rule with visitors to burst into tears at sight of it. Yes, Upper Asquewan is slow, and no mistake. It gets on my nerves sometimes. Nothing to do but work, work, work, and then lay down and wait for tomorrow. I used to think maybe some day they'd transfer me down to Hooperstown—there's moving pictures and such goings on down there. But the railroad never notices you—unless you go wrong. Yes, sir; sometimes I want to clear out of this town myself."

"A natural wanderlust," sympathized Mr. Magee. "You said something just now about Baldpate inn"—

"Yes; it's a little more lively in summer, when that's open," answered the agent. "We get a lot of complaints about trunks not coming from pretty swell people too. It sort of cheers things." His eye roamed with interest over Mr. Magee's New York attire. "But Baldpate inn is shut up tight now. This is nothing but an annex to a graveyard in winter. You wasn't thinking of stopping off here, was you?"

"Well, I want to see a man named Elijah Quimby," Mr. Magee replied. "Do you know him?"

"Of course," said the yearner for pastures new. "He's caretaker of the inn. His house is about a mile out on the old Miller road that leads up Baldpate. Come outside and I'll tell you how to get there."

The two men went out into the whirling snow, and the agent waved a hand indefinitely up at the night.

"If it was clear," he said, "you could see Baldpate mount: over yonder looking down on the falls, sort of keeping an eye on us to make sure we don't get reckless. And halfway up you'd see Baldpate inn, black and peaceful and wintery. Just follow this street to the third corner and turn to your left. Elijah lives in a little house back among the trees a mile out. There's a gate you'll sure hear creaking on a night like this."

Billy Magee thanked him and, gathering up his two bags, walked up Main street. A dreary, forbidding building at the first corner bore the sign "Commercial House."

Weep no more, my lady,
Oh, weep no more today!

hummed Mr. Magee cynically under his breath and glanced up at the solitary upstairs window that gleamed yellow in the night.

At a corner on which stood a little shop that advertised "Groceries and Provisions" he paused.

"Let me see," he pondered. "The lights will be turned off, of course. Candles and a little something for the inner man in case it's the closed season for cooks."

He went inside, where a weary old woman served him.

"What sort of candles?" she inquired, with the air of one who had an infinite variety in stock. Mr. Magee remembered that Christmas was near.

"For a Christmas tree," he explained. He asked for two hundred.

"I've only got forty," the woman said. "What's this tree for—the Orphans' home?"

With the added burden of a package containing his purchases in the tiny store Mr. Magee emerged and continued his journey through the stinging snow.

"Don Quixote, my boy," he muttered, "I know how you felt when you moved on the windmills."

It was not the whir of windmills, but the creak of a gate in the storm that brought Mr. Magee at last to a stop. He walked gladly up the path to Elijah Quimby's door.

In answer to Billy Magee's gay knock, a man of about sixty years appeared. Evidently he had just finished supper. At the moment he was engaged in lighting his pipe. He admitted Mr. Magee into the intimacy of the kitchen, and took a number of calm judicious puffs on the pipe before speaking to his visitor.

"My name's Magee," blithely explained that gentleman, dragging in his bags. "And you're Elijah Quimby, of course. How are you? Glad to see you."

The older man did not reply, but regarded Mr. Magee wonderingly through white puffs of smoke. His face was kindly, gentle, ineffectual.

"Yes," he admitted at last. "Yes, I'm Quimby."

Mr. Magee threw back his coat, and sprayed with snow Mrs. Quimby's immaculate floor.

"I'm Magee," he elucidated again, "William Hallowell Magee, the man Hal Bentley wrote to you about. You got his letter, didn't you?"

Mr. Quimby removed his pipe and forgot to close the aperture as he stared in amazement.

"Good Lord," he cried; "you don't mean—you've really come? Why, we—we thought it was all a joke!"

"Hal Bentley has his humorous moments," agreed Mr. Magee, "but it isn't his habit to fling his jests into Upper Asquewan Falls."

"And—and you're really going to"—Mr. Quimby could get no further.

"Yes," said Mr. Magee brightly, slipping into a rocking chair. "Yes; I'm going to spend the next few months at Baldpate inn."

"It's closed," expostulated Mr. Quimby. "The inn is closed, young fellow."

"I know it's closed," smiled Magee. "That's the very reason I'm going to honor it with my presence. I'm sorry to take you out on a night like this, but I'll have to ask you to lead me up to Baldpate. I believe those were Hal Bentley's instructions—in the letter."

Mr. Quimby towered above Mr. Magee, a shirt sleeved statue of honest American manhood. He scowled.

"Excuse a plain question, young man," he said, "but what are you hiding from?"

"I'm not hiding," said Magee. "Didn't Bentley explain? Well, I'll try to, though I'm not sure you'll understand. Sit down, Mr. Quimby. You are not, I take it, the sort of man to follow closely the frivolous literature of the day."

"What's that?" inquired Mr. Quimby.

"You don't read," continued Mr. Magee, "the sort of novels that are sold by the pound in the department stores. Now, if you had a daughter—a fluffy daughter inseparable from a hammock in the summer—she could help me explain. You see—I write those novels. Wild thrilling tales for the tired business man's tired wife—shots in the night, chases after fortunes, Cupid busy with his arrows all over the place! It's good fun, and I like to do it. There's money in it."

"Is there?" asked Mr. Quimby, with a show of interest.

"Considerable," replied Mr. Magee. "But now and then I get a longing to do something that will make the critics sit up—the real thing, you know. The other day I picked up a newspaper and found my latest brain child advertised as 'the best fall novel Magee ever wrote.' It got on my nerves. I felt like a literary dressmaker, and I could see my public laying down my fall novel and sighing for my early spring styles in fiction. I remembered that once upon a time a critic advised me to go away for ten years to some quiet spot and think. I decided to do it. Baldpate inn is the quiet spot."

"You don't mean," gasped Mr. Quimby, "that you're going to stay there ten years?"

"Bless you, no!" said Mr. Magee. "Critics exaggerate. Two months will do. They say I am a cheap melodramatic ranter. They say I don't go deep. They say my thinking process is a scream. I'm afraid they're right. Now, I'm going to go up to Baldpate inn and think. I'm going to get away from melodrama. I'm going to do a novel so fine and literary that Henry Cabot Lodge will come to me with tears in his eyes and ask me to join his bunch of self made immortals. I'm going to do all this up there at the inn, sitting on the mountain and looking down on this little old world as Jove looked down from Olympus."

"I don't know who you mean," objected Mr. Quimby.

"He was a god—the god of the fruit stand men," explained Magee. "Picture me, if you can, depressed by the overwhelming success of my latest brain child. Picture me meeting Hal Bentley in a Forty-fourth street club and asking him for the location of the lonesomest spot on earth. Hal thought a minute. 'I've got it,' he said, 'the lonesomest spot that's happened to date is a summer resort in midwinter. It makes Crusoe's island look like Coney on a warm Sunday afternoon in comparison.' The talk flowed on along with other things. Hal told me his father owned Baldpate inn and that you were an old friend of his, who would be happy for the entire winter over the chance to serve him. He happened to have a key to the place—the key to the big front door, I guess, from the weight of it—and he gave it to me. He also wrote you to look after me. So here I am."

CHAPTER II.

Alone on Baldpate Mountain.

"THIS ain't exactly—regular," Mr. Quimby protested. "No, it ain't what you might call a frequent occurrence. I'm glad to do anything I can for young Mr. Bentley, but I can't help wondering what his father will say. And there's a lot of things you haven't took into consideration."

"There certainly is, young man," remarked Mrs. Quimby, bustling forward. "How are you going to keep warm in that big barn of a place?"

"The suits on the second floor," said Mr. Magee, "are, I hear, equipped with fireplaces. Mr. Quimby will keep me supplied with fuel from the forest primeval, for which service he will receive $20 a week."

"And light?" asked Mrs. Quimby.

"For the present, candles. I have forty in that package. Later, perhaps, you can find me an oil lamp. Oh, everything will be provided for."

"Well," remarked Mr. Quimby, looking in a dazed fashion at his wife. "I'll reckon I'll have to talk it over with ma."

The two retired to the next room, and Mr. Magee fixed his eyes on a "God Bless Our Home" motto while he awaited their return. Presently they reappeared.

"Was you thinking of eating?" inquired Mrs. Quimby sarcastically, "while you stayed up there?"

"I certainly was," smiled Mr. Magee. "For the most part I will prepare my own meals from cans and—er—jars—and such pagan sources. But now and then you, Mrs. Quimby, are going to send me something cooked as no other woman in the county can cook it. I can see it in your eyes. In my poor way I shall try to repay you."

He continued to smile into Mrs. Quimby's broad, cheerful face. Mr. Magee had the type of smile that moves men to part with ten until Saturday and women to close their eyes and dream of Sir Launcelot.

"It's all fixed," he cried. "We'll get on splendidly. And now—for Baldpate inn."

"Not just yet," said Mrs. Quimby. "I ain't one to let anybody go up to Baldgate inn unfed. I 'spose we're sort o' responsible for you while you're up here. You just set right down and I'll have your supper hot and smoking on the table in no time."

Mr. Magee entered into no dispute on this point, and for half an hour he was the pleased recipient of advice, philosophy and food. When he had assured Mrs. Quimby that he had eaten enough to last him the entire two months he intended spending at the inn Mr. Quimby came in, attired in a huge "before the war" ulster and carrying a lighted lantern.

"So you're going to sit up there and write things," he commented. "Well, I reckon you'll be left to yourself, all right."

"I hope so," responded Mr. Magee. "I want to be so lonesome I'll sob myself to sleep every night. It's the only road to immortality. Goodby, Mrs. Quimby. In my fortress on the mountain I shall expect an occasional culinary message from you." He took her plump hand. This motherly little woman seemed the last link binding him to the world of reality.

"Goodby," smiled Mrs. Quimby. "Be careful of matches."

Mr. Quimby led the way with the lantern, and presently they stepped out upon the road.

"By the way, Quimby," remarked Mr. Magee, "is there a girl in your town who has blue eyes, light hair and the general air of a queen out shopping?"

"Light hair!" repeated Quimby. "There's Sally Perry. She teaches in the Methodist Sunday school."

"No," said Mr. Magee. "My description was poor, I'm afraid. This one I refer to, when she weeps, gives the general effect of mist on the sea at dawn. The Methodists do not monopolize her."

"I read books, and I read newspapers," said Mr. Quimby, "but a lot of your talk I don't understand."

"The critics," replied Billy Magee, "could explain. My stuff is only for low brows. Lead on, Mr. Quimby."

Baldpate inn did not stand tiptoe on the misty mountain top. Instead it clung with grim determination to the side of Baldpate, about halfway up, much as a city man clings to the running board of an open street car. This was the comparison Mr. Magee made, and even as he made it he knew that atmospheric conditions rendered it questionable. For an open street car suggests summer and the ball park; Baldpate inn, as it shouldered darkly into Mr. Magee's ken, suggested winter at its most wintry.

About the great black shape that was the inn, like arms, stretched broad verandas, Mr. Magee remarked upon them to his companion.

"Those porches and balconies and things," he said, "will come in handy in cooling the fevered brow of genius."

"There ain't much fever in this locality," the practical Quimby assured him, "especially not in winter."

Silenced, Mr. Magee followed the lantern of Quimby over the snow to the broad steps, and up to the great front door. There Magee produced from beneath his coat an impressive key. Mr. Quimby made as though to assist, but was waved aside.

"This is a ceremony," Mr. Magee told him, "some day Sunday newspaper stories will be written about it. Baldpate inn opening its doors to the great American novel!"

He placed the key in the lock, turned it, and the door swung open. The coldest blast of air Mr. Magee had ever encountered swept out from the dark interior.

"Whew," he cried, "we've discovered another pole!"

"It's stale air," remarked Quimby.

"You mean the polar atmosphere," replied Magee. "Yes, it is pretty stale. Jack London and Dr. Cook have worked it to death."

"I mean," said Quimby, "this air has been in here alone too long. It's as stale as last week's newspaper. We couldn't heat it with a million fires. We'll have to let in some warm air from outside first."

"Warm air—humph!" remarked Mr. Magee. "Well, live and learn."

The two stood together in a great bare room. When they stepped forward the sound of their shoes on the hard wood seemed the boom that should wake the dead.

"This is the hotel office," explained Mr. Quimby.

At the left of the door was the clerk's desk. Behind it loomed a great safe and a series of pigeonholes for the mail of the guests. Opposite the front door a wide stairway led to a landing halfway up, where the stairs were divorced and went to the right and left in search of the floor above. Mr. Magee surveyed the stairway critically.

"A great place," he remarked, "to show off the talents of your dressmaker, eh, Quimby? Can't you just see the stunning gowns coming down that stair in state and the young men below here agitated in their bosoms?"

"No, I can't," said Mr. Quimby frankly.

"I can't either, to tell the truth," laughed Billy Magee. He turned up his collar. "It's like picturing a summer girl sitting on an iceberg and swinging her openwork hosiery over the edge. I don't suppose it's necessary to register. I'll go right up and select my apartments."

It was upon a suit of rooms that bore the number seven on their door that Mr. Magee's choice fell. A large parlor with a fireplace that a few blazing logs would cheer, a bedroom, whose bed was destitute of all save mattress and springs, and a bathroom comprised his kingdom.

Mr. Magee inspected his apartment. The windows were all of the low French variety and opened out upon a broad snow covered balcony which

"wouldn't wander round none," he advised. "You might fall down something—or something."

was in reality the roof of the first floor veranda. On this balcony Magee stood a moment, watching the trees on Baldpate wave their black arms in the wind and the lights of Upper Asquewan Falls wink knowingly up at him. Then he came inside, and his investigations brought him presently to a tub in the bathroom.

"Fine," he cried—"a cold plunge the morning before the daily strug. for immortality begins!"

He turned the spigot. Nothing happened.

"I reckon," drawled Mr. Quimby from the bedroom, "you'll carry your cold plunge up from the well back of the inn before you plunge into it. The water's turned off. We can't take chances with busted pipes."

"Of course," replied Magee less blithely. His ardor was somewhat dampened—a paradox—by the failure of the spigot to gush forth a response. "There's nothing I'd enjoy more than carrying eight pails of water upstairs every morning to get up an appetite for—what? Oh, well, the Lord will provide. If we propose to best up the great American outdoors, Quimby, I think it's time we had a fire."

Soon Quimby came back with kindling and logs, and subsequently a noisy fire roared in the grate.

"I wouldn't wander round none," he advised. "You might fall down something—or something. I been living in these parts off and on for sixty years and more, and nothing like this ever came under my observation before. Howsomever, I guess it's all right if Mr. Bentley says so. I'll come up in the morning and see you down to the train."

"What train?" inquired Mr. Magee.

"Your train back to New York city," replied Mr. Quimby. "Don't try to start back in the night. There ain't no train till morning."

"Ah, Quimby," laughed Mr. Magee, "you taunt me. You think I won't stick it out. But I'll show you. I tell you I'm hungry for solitude."

"That's all right," Mr. Quimby responded. "You can't make three square meals a day off solitude."

"I'm desperate," said Magee. "Henry Cabot Lodge must come to me, I say, with tears in his eyes. Ever see the senator that way? No? It isn't going to be an easy job. I must put it over. I must go deep into the hearts of men up here and write what I find. No more shots in the night. Just the adventure of soul and soul. Do you see? By the way, here's $20, your first week's pay as caretaker of a New York Quixote."

"What's that?" asked Quimby.

"Quixote," explained Mr. Magee, "was a Spanish lad who was a little confused in his mind and went about the country putting up at summer resorts in midwinter."

"I'd expect it of a Spaniard," Quimby said. "Be careful of that fire. I'll be up in the morning." He stowed away the bill Mr. Magee had given him. "I guess nothing will interfere with your lonesomeness. Leastways I hope it won't. Good night."

Mr. Magee bade the man good night and listened to the thump of his boots and the closing of the great front door. From his windows he watched the caretaker move down the road without looking back, to disappear at last in the white night.

Throwing off his great coat, Mr. Magee noisily attacked the fire. The blaze flared red on his strong, humorous mouth, in his smiling eyes. Next, in the flickering half light of suit 7 he distributed the contents of his traveling bags about. On the table he placed a number of new magazines and a few books.

Then Mr. Magee sat down in the big leather chair before the fire and caught his breath.

Yes, here he was, and here was the solitude he had come to find. Mr. Magee looked nervously about, and the smile died out of his gray eyes. For the first time misgivings smote him. Might one not have too much of a good thing? A silence like that of the tomb had descended. He recalled stories of men who went mad from loneliness. What place lonelier than this? The wind howled along the balcony; it rattled the windows. Outside his door lay a great black cave, in summer gay with men and maids, now like Crusoe's island before the old man landed.

"Alone, alone; all, all alone," quoted Mr. Magee. "If I can't think here it will be because I'm not equipped with the apparatus. I will. I'll show the gloomy old critics! I wonder what's doing in New York?"

New York! Mr. Magee looked at his watch. Eight o'clock. The great street was ablaze. The crowds were parading from the restaurants to the theaters. The electric signs were pasting lurid legends on a long suffering sky; the taxis were spraying throats with gasoline; the traffic cop at Broadway and Forty-second street was madly earning his pay. Mr. Magee got up and walked the floor. New York!

Probably the telephone in his rooms was jangling, vainly calling forth to sport with Amaryllis in the shade of the rubber trees Billy Magee—Billy Magee who sat alone in the silence on Baldpate mountain. Few knew of his departure. This was the night of that stupid attempt at theatricals at the Plaza, stupid in itself, but gay, almost giddy, since Helen Faulkner was to be there. This was the night of the dinner to Carey at the club. This was the night—of many diverting things.

He strode to the window and looked down at the few dim lights that proclaimed the existence of Upper Asquewan Falls. Somewhere down there was the Commercial House; somewhere the girl who had wept so bitterly in that gloomy little waiting room. She was only three miles away, and the thought cheered Mr. Magee. After all, he was not on a desert island.

And yet he was alone, intensely, almost painfully, alone—alone in a vast moaning house that must be his only home until he could go back to the gay city with his masterpiece. What a masterpiece! As though with a surgeon's knife it would lay bare the hearts of men. No tricks of plot, no—

(To be Continued Next Saturday.)